

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation)	
)	
or Suspension of the Educator)	CONSENT ORDER OF
)	
Certificate of Rachel L. Hastings)	VOLUNTARY SURRENDER
)	
Certificate # 216818)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on May 11, 2004. On November 25, 2003, the South Carolina Department of Education (Department) sent Ms. Rachel L. Hastings a notice of hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of her certificate by certified mail, return receipt, and restricted delivery. Ms. Hastings received the notice as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing her signature. Ms. Hastings initially requested a hearing, but subsequently agreed to the voluntary surrender of her certificate, in lieu of a hearing where the Department would seek the permanent revocation of her certificate. As a condition of this agreement, Ms. Hastings may re-apply for a certificate no sooner than three years from the date of this Order. Prior to re-application Ms. Hastings must successfully complete a character fitness review by the State Board. This surrender will be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the voluntary surrender of Ms. Hastings's certificate.

Rachel L.
Hastings
#216818

Initials

Date

Ms. Hastings holds a valid certificate and has less than a year of teaching experience. She was under contract with the Lancaster County School District (District) as an English teacher at Lancaster High School for the 2003-2004 school year. On October 18, 2003, Ms. Hastings resigned from the District following an investigation into allegations that she engaged in an inappropriate relationship of a sexual nature with a sixteen-year old male student. During the investigation the District received allegations from a sixteen-year old male student that Ms. Hastings engaged in a sexual activity with him in October 2003. Ms. Hastings denied a sexual relationship but did admit that she had given the student a ride home on several occasions. While she initially denied he

had ever visited her apartment, Ms. Hastings later admitted the student had been there on one occasion. The time of the visit coincided with the time the student alleged the sexual activity took place. The student also drew an accurate description of Ms. Hastings's apartment.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (1990). Just cause includes "Unprofessional conduct ...Immorality...and...Evident unfitness for the position for which employed." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (1990). The State Board finds that the preponderance of the evidence presented supports its decision to accept the voluntary surrender of Ms. Hastings's certificate # 216818, effective May 11, 2004. As a condition of this Order, Ms. Hastings may re-apply for a certificate no sooner than three years from the date of this Order, subject to the successful completion of a character fitness review by the State Board.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: /S/ Mary E. Jones
Dr. Mary Jones
Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
May 11, 2004

I, Rachel L. Hastings, SC Teaching Certificate # 216818, do hereby agree to the proposed Consent Order of Voluntary Surrender, consisting of two pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the State Board of Education on Tuesday, May 11, 2004, for approval.

/S/ Rachel L. Hastings
Rachel L. Hastings

5/7/04
Date